(ii) one
(iii) Inquiry is under process

3. Department of Information Technology (including NIC)

(i) Total no. of applications received under RTI Act-118
(ii) Total No. of applications replied-112
(iii) Total No. of applications under process-6

The information as available based on the facts with the Departments has been given to the applicants. No wrong information has been provided during the relevant period.

(c) Does not arise.

Sortage of post offices in villages

2438. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is large shortage of post offices in the country;

(b) if so, the State-wise number of post offices at present and the number of post offices required to meet the shortage situation most particularly in villages; and

(c) when the post offices are expected to be set up in villages, State-wise, particularly in Uttar Pradesh?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) No, Sir. India has the largest Postal-Network in the world with 1,55,333 Post Offices (as on 31-03-2006) of which 89% are in rural areas. On an average a Post Office serves an area of 21.16 sq. kms and population of 6623 persons, which compares very favourably with other countries.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) Post Offices are opened subject to fulfilment of distance, population and income norms. In consonance with the policy directives of the 10th Plan regarding rationalization of the postal network, no plan targets have

been allotted for opening of new post offices since 2004-05. However, if justification for opening a Post Office is found, it can only be opened by relocation of an existing post office which is no longer justified, on the departmental norms in its present location. Thus, no time frame can be fixed for opening of post offices.

Spreading of IT enabled units to Rural Areas

2439. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that most of the IT enabled industries are located in or around big cities in the country;

(b) the steps taken by Government to spread IT enabled units to rural areas; and

(c) whether Government would consider providing incentives to IT companies that set up units in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) to (c) IT/IT enabled units are provided with high-speed data communication facility, statutory services and incubation facilities by Software Technology Parks of India (STPI), a society under the Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. An indication of spread of IT/ITES units is indicated by the fact that STPI has established 40 centers in tier-II and tier-III cities, as compared to 7 centers in metros.

STPI is setting up few more centers at Shilong (Meghalaya), Haldia (West Bengal), Berhampur (Orissa), Patna (Bihar), Gurgaon (Haryana), Bhopal & Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh) Kakinada (Andhra Pradesh) and Goa.

Various State Government are also taking initiatives in promoting IT in the major cities of the respective State as the next best destinations for Software exports and create more jobs.

The private industry is also moving to tier-II and tier-III cities in order to tap the available manpower.